

24Subject:	Greater Brighton Economic Board Operational Arrangements for 2025/26		
Date of Meeting:	02 April 2025		
Report of:	Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Andy Hill	Tel: 01273 291873
	Email:	andy.hill@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
LA(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:

- 1.1 This report outlines the preparatory steps needed to support the operational aspects of the Greater Brighton Economic Board (“the Board”) in 2025/26.
- 1.2 This report should be read in conjunction with the Heads of Terms (HoTs) for the Board. The latest version is attached at Appendix 1, and these were last updated in January 2025 as the Board agreed to extend membership to NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board.
- 1.3 In December 2024 the Government published its Devolution White Paper, and in February it was announced that Sussex and Brighton is one of six regions to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme, meaning that over the next 12-14 months a Sussex and Brighton Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) will be established and elections for the first Mayor of Sussex and Brighton will take place in May 2026. The future of existing governance structures such as the Board is unclear beyond 2025/26, and this paper is framed within that context.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board:

- 2.1 Notes that it has around £300,000 of budget based on carry-forward from 2024/25 and therefore agrees that much reduced budgetary contributions be sought from partners to fund the cost of running the Board and delivering its workplan in 2025/26.
- 2.2 Agrees the proposed expenditure in paragraph 3.4.
- 2.3 Agrees that in the context of devolution the Board will need to be agile and may need to consider requesting further funds from members if suitable project opportunities arise.
- 2.4 Agrees that Brighton & Hove City Council shall continue to act as Lead Authority for the Board in 2025/26.
- 2.5 Agree the process set out at sections 3.12 to 3.18 by which the Chair of the Board shall be nominated for 2025/26.

3. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

- 3.1 As outlined in the table below, the budget to support the running costs of the Board in 2025/26 totals £165,243.
- 3.2 In the 2024/25 Operational Arrangements the Board agreed to commit £50,000 to support Sussex Energy in 2024/25 and also in 2025/26, meaning £100,000 over two years.
- 3.3 If agreed, there would be a further £50,000 set aside for a strategic review of the regions' international gateways. The purpose would be to understand how they can better serve Sussex residents, businesses and visitors to the region and how they can attract inwards investment, drive economic growth across the region and act as partners in delivering the Sussex Energy Mission.
- 3.4 In previous years the budget has included £10,000 of contingency funding to be set aside, meaning that the grand total expenditure for 2025/26 will be £325,243.00, as per the table below.

Running Costs 2025/26	
Salary costs (including on-costs) and expenses	£109,114.00
Finance support	£8,188.00
Legal support	£11,213.00
Democratic Services support	£4,778.00
Scrutiny (charged £500 (excluding venue) on a 'pay as you go' basis)	£2,000.00
GBEB Communications	£24,950.00
GBEB Annual report, printing and other materials	£3,500.00
Venue hire, hospitality, and refreshments	£500.00
Additional costs e.g. IT, travel	£1,000.00
Total running costs	£165,243.00
Work Plan	
- Sussex Energy (£50,000 rolled over from 2024/25) - Strategic Infrastructure Study	£100,000.00 £50,000.00
Total Work Plan	£150,000.00
Contingency	£10,000.00
Grand Total 2025/26	£325,243.00

- 3.5 The Board's budget as at 31 March 2025 is currently £300,000. This significant carry-forward is due to several years of cumulative underspends associated with staff vacancies and funds being earmarked for projects that have not ultimately been committed e.g. in 2024/25 £50,000 was agreed to support the Sussex Energy Mission work. The consensus is that these funds would be best used as match funding for a funding bid. The programme wasn't ready to make this bid in 2024/25 but it is in the work plan for 2025/26.
- 3.6 Given that the Board's carry-forward almost covers projected 2025/26 expenditure, the intention is to request much reduced contributions from Board members for 2025/26. If each member provides one quarter of their 2024/25 contribution, this would bridge the gap between the current budget and the projected spend, and leave a small surplus of around £25,000.
- 3.7 The table below shows the 2024/25 contributions and proposed 2025/26 contributions based on this approach. Some of the figures have been rounded to the nearest £5.00. NHS Sussex ICB have not contributed previously having joined the Board in January 2025. Their proposed contribution is consistent with those of the other Business Partners.

Organisation	2024/25 Contribution	Proposed 2025/26 Contribution
South Downs National Park Authority	£7,970.00	£1,995.00
University of Sussex	£7,970.00	£1,995.00
University of Brighton	£7,970.00	£1,995.00
Chichester College Group	£7,970.00	£1,995.00
NHS Sussex ICB	N/A	£1,995.00
Adur District Council	£10,000.00	£2,500.00
Arun District Council	£24,700.00	£6,175.00
Brighton & Hove City Council	£52,200.00	£13,050.00
Crawley Borough Council	£20,750.00	£5,190.00
Lewes District Council	£15,200.00	£3,800.00
Mid Sussex District Council	£24,750.00	£6,190.00
Worthing Borough Council	£18,000.00	£4,500.00
Total Contributions	£197,480.00	£51,380.00
Carry-forward from 2024/25		£300,000.00
Total Budget for 2025/26		£351,380.00

LEAD AUTHORITY:

- 3.8 On 18 July 2023, the Board agreed that Brighton & Hove City Council continue to act as Lead Authority for 2023/24. As outlined in section 1.8 of the HoTs, lead authority arrangements are reviewed every two years and therefore this arrangement was maintained for 2024/25.
- 3.9 In the autumn of 2024 each local authority represented on the Board was due to be invited to submit an expression of interest in fulfilling the Lead Authority role for 2025/26 and 2026/27. The Board would then instigate a procurement exercise to select the most appropriate authority for that role. However, given that the Sussex and Brighton region is moving quickly towards establishing an MCCA, which makes the future of the Board beyond April 2026 very unclear, the recommendation at 2.4 is that Brighton & Hove City Council continue as Lead Authority in 2025/26.

2025/26 BOARD MEETING DATES:

- 3.10 The Board meeting dates for the new municipal year are proposed as follows:
- 16 July 2025
 - 22 October 2025
 - 28 January 2026
 - 25 March 2026
- 3.11 It is proposed that meetings will be held at various locations across Greater Brighton.

MEMBERSHIP AND CHAIRPERSON:

- 3.12 As outlined in section 6 of the HoTs, the Chair will be elected annually by the Joint Committee members. The Chair of the Joint Committee shall, by virtue of their democratic mandate, be the Chair of the Board. It is for the Joint Committee to elect the Chair.
- 3.13 The Chair must be formally appointed at the Board's first meeting in the new municipal year. It is proposed that nominations be sought in advance and that the following process be adopted:
- 3.14 On 19 May 2025, Brighton & Hove City Council's Democratic Services team will issue an email to the local authority Leaders to ask if they would like to put themselves forward as Chair.
- 3.15 Those local authority Leaders choosing to put themselves forward must notify Brighton & Hove City Council's Democratic Services of their decision by 6 June 2025.
- 3.16 On 9 June 2025, Brighton & Hove City Council's Democratic Services will issue an email to all local authority Leaders, advising of the nominations and asking them to cast a vote for their preferred nominee. Each Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee member will have one vote.

- 3.17 On 20 June 2025, Brighton & Hove City Council Democratic Services will issue an email to all members of the Board to advise them of the elected Chair.
- 3.18 On 18 July 2025 members of the Greater Brighton Joint Committee will formally appoint the new Chair (this will be the first item of business).
- 3.19 In the event that the vote is tied, Brighton & Hove City Council's Democratic Services will issue an email to all local authority Leaders, informing that the first round has been tied and asking them to vote again on the preferred nominees.
- 3.20 All member organisations are required to inform Brighton & Hove City Council's Democratic Services of their substitute representatives by 20 June 2025. In line with section 9 of the HoTs, the list of substitutes will be approved by the Board at its first meeting in the new municipal year.
- 3.21 As stated in section 4.3 of the HoTs, the work of the Board shall be subject to review by an ad-hoc joint local authority scrutiny panel that is managed by the Lead Authority. It is proposed that the current Call-In Protocol remains unchanged for 2025/26. The Protocol is attached as Appendix 2. Members of the Board are required to inform Brighton & Hove City Council's Democratic Services of their Greater Brighton Call-In Panel representatives by 20 June 2025.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

- 4.1 The proposals are in accordance with the governance arrangements agreed by the Board.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION:

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. CONCLUSION:

- 6.1 To ensure that the Board transitions smoothly into the new municipal year, Board members are asked to:

- (1) Agree the costs of running the Board and delivering its work-plan in 2025/26;
- (2) Note that Brighton & Hove City Council shall continue to act as Lead Authority for the Board in 2025/26;
- (3) Agree the process by which the Chair of the Board shall be nominated for 2025/26, and;
- (4) Note the requirement, and instruct the necessary actions within their respective organisations, to:
 - a) Notify the lead authority of their named substitutes by 20 June 2025, and;
 - b) Notify the lead authority of their nominations to the Greater Brighton Call-In Panel by 20 June 2025.

FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The Board's proposed 2025/26 budget is outlined in paragraph 3.4. This includes an annual operating budget of £165,243 for the forthcoming financial year to enable the Accountable Body to provide legal, financial, communications and administrative support to allow the Board to deliver its work-plan. In addition, the budget proposes £100,000 to support Sussex Energy Mission work (£50,000 of which is carried forward from 2024/25), £50,000 to conduct a Strategic Infrastructure study, and a £10,000 contingency.
- 7.2 The budget is funded by annual contributions from member authorities. The proposed contributions from members totalling £51,380 are detailed within paragraph 3.7 of this report. These contributions are reduced significantly in 2025/26 compared to 2024/25 and previous years as a result of the majority of the proposed budget being funded by a carry forward of £300,000 from 2024/25. This carry forward arises as the result of cumulative revenue underspends in the Board's activity. The methodology for apportioning contributions from each member reflects the method approved by the Board in July 2024 for the 2024/25 Operational Arrangements.

Finance Officer Consulted: Haley Woollard

Date: 24/03/2025

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 [(DRAFT pending discusson/change of 2.4) - The recommendations in this report are in line with the Heads of Terms. Any changes to the Heads of Terms must be varied by a resolution of the Board and approved by each body represented on the Board.]

Lawyer Consulted: Siobhan Fry Head of Legal (Commercial) Brighton and Hove City Council

Date: 24/03/2025

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 None directly arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 None directly arising from this report.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.6 None directly arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Heads of Terms for Greater Brighton Economic Board
2. Greater Brighton Economic Board Call-In Protocol

